

THE RIVAL QUEENS;

OR, THE DEATH OF

ALEXANDER THE GREAT.

A

TRAGEDY.

BY NATHANIEL LEE, ESQ.

ADAPTED FOR

THEATRICAL REPRESENTATION,

AS PERFORMED AT THE

THEATRES-ROYAL, DRURY-LANE AND COVENT-GARDEN.

REGULATED FROM THE PROMPT-BOOKS,

By Permission of the Managers.

THE Number and Nature of the Alterations, &c. in this Play, have induced the Editor to deviate from his general Plan, and present it to the Public as literally represented.

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M DCC XCIII.



TO THE RIGHT HONOURABLE

JOHN, EARL OF MULGRAVE.

Gentleman of His Majesty's Bedchamber, and Knight of the most noble
Order of the Garter.

MY LORD,

WHEN I hear by many persons, not indifferent judges, how poets are censured most even where they most intend to please, and sometimes by those too whom they address condemned for flatterers, sycophants, and little fawning wretches; I confess, of all undertakings, there is none more dreadful to me than a Dedication. So nicely cruel are our judges, that after a play has been generally applauded on the stage, the industrious malice of some after-observer shall damn it for an epistle or a preface. For this reason, my lord, Alexander was more to seek for a patron in my troubled thoughts than for the temple of Jupiter Ammon in the spreading wilds and rolling sands. 'Tis certain too he must have been lost, had not fortune, whom I must once at least acknowledge kind in my life presented me to your lordship. You were pleased, my lord, to read it over act by act; and by particular praises, proceeding from the sweetness rather than the justice of your temper, lifted me up from my natural melancholy and diffidence to a bold belief, that what so great an understanding warranted could not fail of success.

And here I were most ungrateful if I should not satisfy the judging world of the surprise I was in.—Pardon me, my lord, for calling it a surprise, when I was first honoured by waiting upon your lordship: so much unexpected, and, indeed, unusual affability, from persons of your birth and quality, so true an easiness, such frankness without affectation, I never saw. Your constant but few friends show the firmness of your mind, which

never varies; so godlike a virtue, that a prince puts off his majesty when he parts with resolution. In all the happy times that I attended you, unless business or accident interposed, I have observed your company to be the same. You have travelled through all tempers, sailed through all humours of the court's unconstant sea; you have gained the gallant prizes which you sought, your selected invaluable friends; and I am perfectly persuaded, if you traffic but seldom abroad, it is for fear of splitting upon knaves or fools. Nor is it pride, but rather a delicacy of your soul, that makes you shun the sordid part of the world, the lecs and dregs of it; while in the noblest retirement you enjoy the finer spirits, and have that just greatness to be above the baser. How commendable, therefore, is such a reservation! how admirable such a solitude! If you are singular in this, we ought to blame the wild, unthinking, dissolute age; an age whose business is senseless riot, Neronian gambols, and ridiculous debauchery; an age that can produce few persons besides your lordship who dare be alone: all our hot hours burnt in night revels, drowned by day in dead sleep, or if we wake, it is a point of reeling honour jogs us to the field, where, if we live or die, we are not concerned; for the soul was laid out before we went abroad, and our bodies were after acted by mere animal spirits without reason.

When I more narrowly contemplate your person, methinks I see in your lordship two of the most famous characters that ever ancient or modern story could produce, the mighty Scipio and the retired Cowley. You have certainly the gravity, temperance, and judgment, as well as the courage, of the first; all which in your early attempts of war gave the noblest dawn of virtue, and will, when occasion presents, answer our expectation, and shine forth at full: then for the latter, you possess all his sweetness of humour in peace, all that halcyon tranquillity of mind, where your deep thoughts glide like silent waters without a wrinkle; your hours move with softest wings, and rarely any *'larum* strikes to discompose you. You have the philosophy of the first, and (which I confess of all your qualities I love most) the poetry of the latter. I was never more moved at Vir-

gil's Dido than at a short poem of your lordship's, where nothing but the shortness can be disliked. As our churchmen wish there were more noblemen of their function; so wish I, in the behalf of depressed poetry, that there were more poets of your lordship's excellency and eminence. If poetry be a virtue, she is a ragged one, and never in any age went barer than now. It may be objected she never deserved less. To that I must not answer: but I am sure when she merited most she was always dissatisfied, or she would not have forsaken the most splendid courts in the world. Virgil and Horace, favourites of the mightiest emperor, retired from him, preferring a mistress or a white boy, and two or three cheerful drinking friends in a country village, to all the magnificence of Rome; or, if sometimes they were snatched from their cooler pleasures to an imperial banquet, we may see by their verses in praise of a country life, it was against their inclination; witness Horace, in his episode—*Beatus ille qui procul*, &c. part of his sixth satire, his epistle to Fusc. Arist. Virgil's Georgic, *O Fortunatos nimium bona si*, &c. all rendered by Mr. Cowley so copiously and naturally, as no age gone before or coming after shall equal, though all heads join together to outdo him: I speak not of his exactness to a line, but of the whole. This then may be said as to the condition of poets in all times, few ever arrived to a middle fortune, most have lived at the lowest, none ever mounted to the highest; neither by birth—for none was ever born a prince, as no prince, to my remembrance, was ever born a poet; nor by industry, because they were always too much transported by their own thoughts from minding the grave business of a world, nor of their humour: whereas, even slaves, the rubbish of the earth, have by most prodigious fortune gained a sceptre, and with their vile heads sullied the glories of a crown. Praise is the greatest encouragement we chameleons can pretend to, or rather the manna that keeps soul and body together; we devour it as if it was angels' food, and vainly think we grow immortal. For my own part, I acknowledge I never received a better satisfaction from the applause of an audience than I have from your single judgment. You gaze at beauties and wink at blemishes, and do both so gracefully, that the first discovers the acuteness of your

judgment, the other the excellency of your nature. And I can affirm to your lordship, there is nothing transports a poet, next to love, like commending in the right place; therefore, my lord, this play must be your's; and Alexander, whom I have raised from the dead, comes to you with the assurance answerable to his character and your virtue. You cannot expect him in his majesty of two thousand years ago; I have only put his ashes in an urn, which are now offered, with all observance, to your lordship, by

My lord,

Your lordship's most humble,

obliged, and devoted servant,

NAT. LEE.

THE RIVAL QUEENS.

A GREAT and glorious flight of a bold, but frenzied imagination ; having as much absurdity as sublimity, and as much extravagance as passion—The Poet, the genius, and the scholar, are every where visible.—This Play acts well, and is still frequently performed.

To Mr. LEE, *on his* ALEXANDER.

THE blast of common censure could I fear,
Before your play my name should not appear ;
For 't will be thought, and with some colour too,
I pay the bribe I first receiv'd from you ;
That mutual vouchers for our fame we stand,
To play the game into each other's hand ;
And as cheap penn'worths to ourselves afford,
As Bessus and the brothers of the sword.
Such libels private men may well endure,
When states and kings themselves are not secure ;
For ill men, conscious of their inward guilt,
Think the best actions on by-ends are built :
And yet my silence had not 'scap'd their spight,
Then envy had not suffer'd me to write ;
For since I could not ignorance pretend
Such merit I must envy or commend.
So many candidates there stand for wit,
A place in court is scarce so hard to get ;
In vain they crowd each other at the door,
For ev'n reversions are all begg'd before ;
Desert, how known soe'er, is long delay'd,
And then too, fools and knaves are better paid :
Yet as some actions bear so great a name
That courts themselves are just for fear of shame,
So has the mighty merit of your play
Extorted praise and forc'd itself a way.
'Tis here as 't is at sea, who farthest goes,
Or dares the most, makes all the rest his foes.

Yet when some virtue much outgrows the rest,
It shoots too fast and high to be exprest ;
As his heroic worth struck envy dumb,
Who took the Dutchman and who cut the boom.
Such praise is your's, while you the passions move,
That 't is no longer feign'd—'t is real love,
Where nature triumphs over wretched art ;
We only warm the head—but you the heart :
Always you warm ; and if the rising year,
As in hot regions, brings the sun too near,
'T is but to make your fragrant spices blow,
Which in our cooler climates will not grow ;
They only think you animate your theme
With too much fire, who are themselves all phlegm :
Prizes would be for lags of slowest pace,
Were cripples made the judges of the race.
Despise those drones who praise while they accuse
The too much vigour of your youthful muse :
That humble stile which they their virtue make,
Is in your power—you need but stoop and take.
Your beauteous images must be allow'd
By all, but some vile poets of the crowd :
But how should any sign-post dauber know
The worth of Titian, or of Angelo ?
Hard features ev'ry bungler can command ;
To draw true beauty, shows a master's hand.

JOHN DRYDEN.

PROLOGUE.

WRITTEN BY SIR CAR SCROOP, BART.

HOW hard the fate is of the scribbling drudge
Who writes to all, when yet so few can judge !
Wit, like religion, once divine was thought,
And the dull crowd believ'd as they were taught ;
Now each fanatic fool presumes to explain
The text, and does the sacred writ profane ;
For while your wits each other's fall pursue,
The fops usurp the power belongs to you.
Ye think y' are challeng'd in each new play-bill,
And here you come for trial of your skill ;
Where, fencer-like, you one another hurt,
While with your wounds you make the rabble sport.
Others there are that have the brutal will
To murder a poor play—but want the skill ;
They love to fight, but seldom have the wit
To spy the place where they may thrust and hit ;
And therefore, like some bully of the town,
Ne'er stand to draw—but knock the poet down.
With these, like hogs in gardens, it succeeds,
They root up all, and know not flowers from weeds.
As for you, sparks, that hither come each day,
To act your own, and not to mind our play ;
Rehearse your usual follies to the pit,
And with loud nonsense crown the stages wit ;
Talk of your clothes—your last debauches tell,
And witty bargains to each other sell ;
Glout on the silly she, who for your sake,
Can vanity and noise for love mistake ;

*'Till the coquet, sung in the next lampoon,
Is by her jealous friends sent out of town;
For in this duelling, intriguing age,
The love you make is like the war you wage,
Y^e are still prevented e'er you come t' engage :
But 'tis not to such trifling foes as you
The mighty Alexander deigns to sue—
Ye Persians of the pit he does despise;
But to the men of sense for aid he flies :
On their experienc'd arms he now depends,
Nor fears he odds, if they but prove his friends.
For as he once a little handful chose
The numerous armies of the world t' oppose :
So back'd by you, who understands the rules,
He hopes to rout the mighty host of fools.*

Dramatis Personæ.

COVENT-GARDEN.

Men.

ALEXANDER THE GREAT, - - - - Mr. Clinch.
HEPHESTION, Alexander's favourite, - Mr. Wroughton.
LYSIMACHUS, prince of the blood, - - Mr. Hull.
CASSANDER, }
POLYPERCHON, } Conspirators, - - { Mr. Fearon.
PHILIP, } { Mr. Booth.
CLYTUS, master of the horse, - - - Mr. Clarke.
THESSALUS, the Median, - - - - Mr. Thompson.
PERDICCAS, a Commander, - - - - Mr. Whitfield.
EUMENES, - - - - - Mr. Fox.
ARISTANDER, a Soothsayer, - - - - Mr. L'Estrange.
SLAVE, - - - - -

Women.

ROXANA, first Wife of Alexander, - - Mrs. Hunter.
SYSIGAMBIS, Mother of the Royal Family, Mrs. Booth.
PARISATIS, in love with Lysimachus, - Miss Dayes.
STATIRA, married to Alexander, - - Mrs. Hartley.

SCENE, Babylon.



THE RIVAL QUEENS.

ACT I. SCENE I.

The Gardens of Semiramis. Enter HEPHESTION and LYSIMACHUS fighting; CLYTUS parting them.

Clytus.

WHAT! are ye madmen? This a time for quarrel?
Put up, I say—or by the gods that form'd me
He who refuses makes a foe of Clytus!

Lys. I have his sword.

Clyt. But must not have his life.

Lys. Must not, old Clytus!

Clyt. Hair-brain'd boy, you must not.

Heph. Lend me thy sword, thou father of the war,
Thou far-fam'd guard of Alexander's life,
Curse on this weak, unexecuting arm!

10

Lend it, old Clytus, to redeem my fame;
Lysimachus is brave, and else will scorn me.

Lys. There, take thy sword; and since thou'rt bent on
death,

Know't is thy glory that thou dy'st by me.

Clyt. Stay thee, Lysimachus—Hephestion hold;
I bar you both. My body interpos'd.
Now let me see which of you dares to strike.
By Jove you 'ave stirr'd the old man!—that rash arm

That first advances, moves against the gods
And our great king, whose deputy I stand.

20

Lys. Some prop'rer time must terminate our quarrel.

Heph. And cure the bleeding wounds my honour bears.

Clyt. Some prop'rer time! 't is false—no hour is proper;
No time should see a brave man do amiss.—
Say what's the noble cause of all this madness—
What vast ambition blows the dang'rous fire?
Why, a vain, smiling, whining, coz'ning woman!
By all my triumphs in the heat of youth,
When towns were 'sack'd, and beauties prostrate lay;
When my blood boil'd, and nature work'd me high,
Clytus ne'er bow'd his body to such shame;
I knew 'em, and despis'd their cobweb arts—
The whole sex is not worth a soldier's thought.

30

Lys. Our cause of quarrel may to thee seem light;
But know a less hath set the world in arms.

Clyt. Yes, Troy, they tell us, by a woman fell;
Curse on the sex, they are the bane of virtue!
Death! I'd rather this right arm were lost,
Than that the king should hear of your imprudence—
What, on a day thus set apart for triumph!

40

Lys. We were indeed to blame.

Clyt. This memorable day,
When our hot master, whose impatient soul
Outrides the sun, and sighs for other worlds,
To spread his conquests and diffuse his glory,
Now bids the trumpet for a while be silent,
And plays with monarchs whom he us'd to drive;
Shall we by broils awake him into rage,
And rouse the lion that hath ceas'd to roar?

Lys. Clytus, thou'rt right—put up thy sword, Hephestion:
Had passion not eclips'd the light of reason
Untold we might this consequence have seen.

51

Heph. Why has not reason power to conquer love ?
Why are we thus enslav'd ?

Clyt. Because unmann'd,
Because ye follow Alexander's steps.
Heavens ! that a face should thus bewitch his soul,
And ruin all that's great and godlike in him !
Talk be my bane—yet the old man must talk.
Not so he lov'd when he at Issus fought
And join'd in mighty combat with Darius;
Whom from his chariot, flaming bright with gems,
He hurl'd to earth and catch'd th' imperial crown.
'Twas not the shaft of love perform'd that feat—
He knew no cupids then. Now mark the change ;
A brace of rival queens embroil the court ;
And while each hand is thus employ'd in beauty
Where has he room for glory ?

60

Heph. In his heart.

Clyt. Well said, young Minion !—I indeed forgot
To whom I spoke—But Sysigambis comes :
Now is your time, for with her comes an idol
That claims your homage.—I 'll attend the king. [Exit.

70

Enter SYSIGAMBIS with a Letter, and PARISATIS.

Sys. Why will ye wound me with your fond complaints,
And urge a suit that I can never grant ?
You know, my child, 't is Alexander's will ;
Here he demands you for his lov'd Hephestion ;
To disobey him might inflame his wrath,
And plunge our house in ruins yet unknown.

Par. To sooth this god and charm him into temper
Is there no victim, none but Parisatis ?
Must I be doom'd to wretchedness and woe,
That others may enjoy the conqu'ror's smiles ?

80

Oh ! if you ever lov'd my royal father—
 And sure you did, your gushing tears proclaim it—
 If still his name be dear, have pity on me !
 He would not thus have forc'd me to despair ;
 Indeed he would not—Had I begg'd him thus
 He would have heard me ere my heart was broke !

Sys. When will my sufferings end ? oh, when, ye gods !
 For sixty rolling years my soul has stood 91
 The dread vicissitudes of fate unmov'd :
 I thought 'em your decrees, and therefore yielded :
 But this last trial, as it springs from folly,
 Exceeds my suff'rance, and I must complain !

Lys. When Sysigambis mourns, no common woe
 Can be the cause—'t is misery indeed !
 Yet pardon, mighty queen ! a wretched prince
 Who thus presumes to plead the cause of love.
 Beyond my life, beyond the world [*Kneeling.*] I prize 100
 Fair Parisatis.—Hear me, I conjure you !
 As you have authoriz'd Hephestion's vows
 Reject not mine—grant me but equal leave
 To serve the princess, and let love decide.

Heph. A blessing like the beauteous Parisatis
 Whole years of service, and the world's wide empire,
 With all the blood that circles in our veins,
 Can never merit ; therefore in my favour
 I begg'd the king to interpose his interest—
 Therefore I begg'd your majesty's assistance ; 110
 Your word is past, and all my hopes rest on 't.

Lys. [*Rising.*] Perish such hopes ! for love 's a gen'rous
 passion,
 Which seeks the happiness of her we love
 Beyond th' enjoyment of our own desires ;
 Nor kings nor parents here have ought to do :

Love owns no influence, and disdains controul ;
Let 'em stand neuter—'t is all I ask.

Heph. Such arrogance did Alexander woo,
Would lose him all the conquests he has won.

Lys. To talk of conquests well becomes the man 120
Whose life, and sword, are but his rival's gift !

Sys. It grieves me, brave Lysimachus, to find
My power fall short of my desires to serve you ;
You know Hephestion first declar'd his love,
And 't is as true I promis'd him my aid ;
Your glorious king, his mighty advocate,
Became himself an humble suppliant for him.
Forget her, prince, and triumph o'er your passion,
A conquest worthy of a soul like thine.

Lys. Forget her, madam ! sooner shall the sun 130
Forget to shine, and tumble from his sphere.

Alas ! the stream that circles thro' my heart,
Is less than love essential to my being !
Farewell, great queen—my honour now demands
That Alexander should himself explain
That wondrous merit which exalts his fav'rite,
And casts Lysimachus at such a distance.

[*Exit.*

Sys. In this wild transport of ungovern'd passion,
Too far, I fear, he will incense the king.
Is Alexander yet, my lord, arriv'd ?

140

Heph. Madam, I know not ; but Cassander comes ;
He may, perhaps, inform us.

Sys. I would shun him :
Something there is, I know not why, that shocks me ;
Something my nature shrinks at when I see him. [Exeunt.

Enter CASSANDER.

Cas. The face of day now blushes scarlet deep,

Now blackens into night ; the low'ring sun,
 As if the dreadful business he foreknew,
 Drives heavily his sable chariot on. [Thunder.
 How fierce it lightens ! how it thunders round me ! 150
 All nature seems alarm'd for Alexander.
 Why, be it so : her pangs proclaim my triumph.
 My soul's first wishes are to startle fate,
 And strike amazement thro' the host of heaven.
 A mad Chaldean with a flaming torch,
 Came to my bed last night, and bellowing o'er me,
 ' Well had it been,' he cry'd, ' for Babylon,
 ' If curst Cassander never had been born.'

Enter THESALUS with a Packet.

How now ? dear Thessalus ! what packet's that ?
Thes. From Macedon ; a trusty slave just brought it.
 Your father chides us for our cold delay ; 161
 He says Craterus, by the king's appointment,
 Comes in his room to govern Macedon,
 Which nothing but the tyrant's death can hinder ;
 ' Therefore he bids us boldly strike,
 Or quit our purpose and confess our fears.
Cas. Is not his fate resolv'd ? this night he dies ;
 And thus my father but forestals my purpose.
 How am I slow then ? if I rode on thunder,
 Wing'd as the lightning, it would ask some moments 170
 Ere I could blast the growth of this Colossus.
Thes. Mark where the haughty Polyperchon comes !
 Some new affront by Alexander given
 Swells in his heart, and stings him into madness.
Cas. Now, now 's our time ; he must, he shall be ours ;
 His haughty soul will kindle at his wrongs,
 Blaze into rage, and glory in revenge.

Enter POLYPERCHON.

Poly. Still as I pass fresh murmurs fill my ears ;
All talk of wrongs, and mutter their complaints.
Poor soulless reptiles !—their revenge expires 180
In idle threats—the fortitude of cowards !
Their province is to talk, 't is mine to act,
And show this tyrant, when he dar'd to wrong me,
He wrong'd a man whose attribute is vengeance.

Cas. All nations bow their heads with servile homage,
And kiss the feet of this exalted man.
The name, the shout, the blast, from ev'ry mouth
Is Alexander ! Alexander stuns
The listning ear, and drowns the voice of Heaven !
The earth's commanders fawn like crouching spaniels ; 190
And if this hunter of the barb'rous world
But wind himself a god, all echo him
With universal cry.

Poly. I fawn or echo him !
Cassander, no ; my soul disdains the thought !
Let eastern slaves or prostituted Greeks
Crouch at his feet, or tremble if he frown ;
When Polyperchon can descend so low,
False to that honour which thro' fields of death
I still have courted where the fight was fiercest, 200
Be scorn my portion, infamy my lot.

Tbes. The king may doom me to a thousand tortures,
Ply me with fire, and rack me like Philotas,
Ere I shall stoop to idolize his pride.

Cas. Not Aristander, had he rais'd an hell,
Could more have shock'd my soul, than thou hast done
By the bare mention of Philotas' murder.
Oh, Polyperchon ! how shall I describe it !

Did not your eyes rain blood to see the hero ?
 Did not your spirits burst with smother'd vengeance 210
 To see thy noble fellow-warrior tortur'd,
 Yet without groaning or a tear endure
 The torments of the damn'd ? Oh ! death to think it !
 We saw him bruis'd, we saw his bones laid bare,
 His veins wide lac'd, and the poor quiv'ring flesh
 With fiery pincers from his bosom torn,
 'Till all beheld where the great heart lay panting.

Poly. Yet all like statues stood !—cold lifeless statues !
 As if the sight had froze us into marble ;
 When with collected rage we should have flown 220
 To instant vengeance on the ruthless cause,
 And plung'd a thousand daggers in his heart.

Cas. At our last banquet, when the bowl had gone
 The giddy round, and wine inflam'd my spirits,
 I saw Craterus and Hephestion enter
 In Persian robes : to Alexander's health
 They largely drank, and falling at his feet,
 With impious adoration thus address'd
 Their idol gods : Hail, son of thund'ring Jove !
 Hail, first of kings ! young Ammon, live for ever ! 230
 Then kiss'd the ground, on which I laugh'd aloud,
 And scoffing ask'd 'em why they kiss'd no harder ?
 Whereon the tyrant, starting from his throne,
 Spurn'd me to earth, and stamping on my neck,
 Learn thou to kiss it, was his fierce reply,
 While with his foot he press'd me to the earth,
 Till I lay welt'ring in a foam of blood.

Poly. Thus when I mock'd the Persians that ador'd him
 He struck me on the face,
 And bid his guards chastise me like a slave : 240
 But if he 'scape my vengeance, may he live

Great as that god whose name he thus profanes,
And like a slave may I again be beaten,
Scoff'd as I pass, and branded for a coward.

Cas. There spoke the spirit of Calisthenes.
Remember he 's a man, his flesh as penetrable
As any girl's, and wounded too as soon ;
To give him death no thunders are requir'd :
Struck by a stone, young Jupiter has fallen,
A sword has pierc'd him and the blood has follow'd, 250
Water will drown him, or the fire will burn ;
Nay, we have seen an hundred common aliments
Bring this immortal to the gates of death.

Poly. Oh, let us not delay the glorious business !
Our wrongs are great, and honour calls for vengeance.
Are your hearts firm ?

Thes. As heaven or hell can make them.

Poly. Take then my hand, and if you doubt my truth
Rip up my breast, and lay my heart upon it.

Cas. While thus we join our hands and hearts together,
Remember Hermolaus, and be hush'd. 261

Poly. Hush'd as the eve before an hurricane,
Or baneful planets, when they shed their poisons.

Cas. This day exulting Babylon receives
The mighty robber—with him comes Roxana,
Fierce haughty fair ! on his return from India
Artful she met him in the height of triumph ;
And by a thousand wiles at Susa kept him
In all the luxury of eastern revels.

Poly. How bore Statira his revolted love ? 270
For if I err not, ere the king espous'd her,
She made him promise to renounce Roxana.

Thes. No words can paint the anguish it occasion'd ;
Ev'n Sysigambis wept, while the wrong'd queen,

Struck to the heart, fell lifeless on the ground,
And thus remain'd, spite of her care and cordials,
For an hour.

Cas. When the first tumult of her grief was laid
I sought to fire her into wild revenge,
And to the end, with all the art I could 280
Describ'd his passion for the bright Roxana ;
But tho' I could not to my wish inflame her,
Thus far at least, her jealousy will help ;
She 'll give him troubles that perhaps may end him,
And set the court in universal uproar.
But see, she comes. Our plots begin to ripen ;
Now change the vizer, ev'ry one disperse,
And with a face of friendship meet the king. [Exeunt.

Enter SYSIGAMBIS, STATIRA, and PARISATIS.

Stat. Oh for a dagger, a draught of poison, flames !
Swell heart ! break, break, thou wretched stubborn thing !
Now by the sacred fire I 'll not be held ? 291
Why do you wish my life, yet stifle me for
Want of air ?——Pray give me leave to walk.

Sys. Is there no rev'rence to my person due ?
Trust me, Statira, had thy father liv'd
Darius would have heard me.

Stat. Oh, he's false !
This glorious man, this wonder of the world,
Is to his love and ev'ry god foresworn !
Oh ! I have heard him breathe such ardent vows, 300
Outweep the morning with his dewy eyes,
And sigh and swear the listening stars away !

Sys. Believe not rumour ; 't is impossible :
Thy Alexander is renown'd for truth,
Above deceit——

Stat. Away, and let me die :

'T was but my fondness, 't was my easy nature,
Would have excus'd him.——

Are not his falsehoods and Statira's wrongs
A subject canvass'd in the mouths of millions ? 310
The babbling world can talk of nothing else,
Why, Alexander, why wouldst thou deceive me !
Have I not lov'd thee, cruel as thou art !
Have I not kiss'd thy wounds with dying fondness,
Bath'd 'em in tears, and bound 'em with my hair !
Whole nights I 'ave sat and watch'd thee as a child,
Lull'd thy fierce pains, and sung thee to repose !

Par. If man can thus renounce the solemn ties
Of sacred love, who would regard his vows ?

Stat. Regard his vows ! the monster ! traitor ! Oh !
I will forsake the haunts of men, converse 321
No more with aught that 's human, dwell with darkness ;
For since the sight of him is now unwelcome,
What has the world to give Statira joy ?
Yet I must tell thee, perjur'd as he is,
Not the soft breezes of the genial spring,
The fragrant violet, or opening rose,
Are half so sweet as Alexander's breath.
Then he will talk—good gods ! how he will talk !
He speaks the kindest words, and looks such things, 330
Vows with such passion, and swears with such a grace,
That it is heaven to be deluded by him !

Sys. Her sorrows must have way.

Stat. Roxana then enjoys my perjur'd love,
Roxana clasps my monarch in her arms,
Dotes on my conq'ror, my dear lord, my king !
Oh, 't is too much ! by heaven I cannot bear it !
She clasps him all—she, the curst happy she——

I'll die, or rid me of the burning torture!

Hear me, bright god of day! hear ev'ry god!

340

Sys. Take heed, Statira, weigh it well, my child,
Ere desp'rate love enforces you to swear.

Stat. Oh! fear not that, already have I weigh'd it,
And in the presence here of heaven and you,
Renounce all converse with perfidious man.
Farewell, ye coz'ners of our easy sex!
And thou, the falsest of the faithless kind,
Farewell for ever! Oh! farewell! farewell!
If I but mention him the tears will flow!

How could'st thou, cruel! wrong a heart like mine, 350
Thus fond, thus doating, e'en to madness on thee!

Sys. Clear up thy griefs, thy Alexander comes,
Triumphant in the spoils of conquer'd India;
This day the hero enters Babylon.

Stat. Why, let him come; all eyes will gaze with rapture,
All hearts will joy to see the victor pass,
All but the wretched, the forlorn Statira.

Sys. Wilt thou not see him then?

Stat. I swear, and heaven be witness to my vow! [*Kneels.*
Never from this sad hour, never to see 360
Nor speak; no, nor, if possible, to think
Of Alexander more. This is my vow,
And when I break it—

Sys. Do not ruin all.

Stat. May I again be perjur'd and deluded!
May furies rend my heart! may light'nings blast me!—

Sys. Recall, my child, the dreadful imprecation.

Stat. No, I will publish it through all the court,
Then to the bowers of great Semiramis
Retire for ever from the treach'rous world; 370

There, from man's sight will I conceal my woes,
And seek in solitude a calm repose ;
Nor prayers nor tears shall my resolves controul,
Nor love itself, that tyrant of the soul.

[*Exeunt.*]

ACT II. SCENE I.

A Triumphal Arch. Enter CASSANDER and POLYPERCHON.

Cassander.

HE comes, the headlong Alexander comes ;
The gods forbid him Babylon in vain ;
In vain do prodigies foretell his fall ;
Attended by a throng of scepter'd slaves
This rapid conq'ror of the ravag'd globe
Makes his appearance, and defies the danger.

Poly. Why all this noise—ye partial powers declare—
These starts of nature, at a tyrant's doom ?
Is Alexander of such wondrous moment
That heaven should feel the wild alarms of fear,
And fate itself become a babbler for him ?

10

Cas. Cas'd in the very arms we saw him wear
The spirit of his father haunts the court,
In all the majesty of solemn sorrow :
The awful spectre fix'd his eyes upon me,
Wav'd his pale hand—and threatful shook his head,
Groan'd out forbear—and vanish'd from my view.
A fear 'till then unknown possess'd my soul,
And sick'ning nature trembled at the sight !

Poly. Why should you tremble ?—Had the yawning earth
Laid all the tortures of the damn'd before me ;

21

My soul, unshaken in her firm resolve ;
Would brave those tortures and pursue the tyrant.

Cas. Yes, Polyperchon, he this night shall die ;
Our plots in spite of prodigies advance ;
Success attends us.—Oh, it joys my soul
To deal destruction like the hand of Heaven,
Felt while unseen !

Poly. The Persians all dissatisfied appear,
Loudly they murmur at Statira's wrongs,
And fiercely censure Alexander's falsehood.

30

Cas. I know he loves Statira more than life ;
And when he hears the solemn vow she made,
The oath that bars her from his sight for ever,
Remorse and horror will at once invade him,
Rend his wreck'd soul, and rush him into madness.

Poly. Of that anon—the court begins to thicken ;
From ev'ry province of the wide-spread earth
Ambassadors in Babylon are met ;
As if mankind had previously agreed
To compliment the tyrant's boundless pride,
And hold a solemn synod of the world,
Where Alexander like a god should dictate.

40

Cas. We must away, or mingle with the crowd.
Adore this god 'till apt occasion calls
To make him what he would be thought—immortal.

[*Exeunt.*]

*A Symphony of Warlike Music. Enter CLYTUS, and ARIS-
TANDER, in his Robes.*

Arist. Haste, rev'rend Clytus, haste and stop the king.

Clyt. Already is he enter'd, and the throng
Of princes that surround him is so great
They keep at distance all that would approach.

50

Arist. Were he encircled by the gods themselves
I must be heard, for death awaits his stay.

Clyt. Then place yourself within his trumpet's sound ;
Shortly he 'll appear. [Exeunt.

*Enter ALEXANDER in a Triumphal Car, drawn by black Slaves,
Trophies and Warlike Ensigns in Procession before him ; CLY-
TUS, HEPHESTION, LYSIMACHUS, ARISTANDER, Cap-
tives, Guards, and Attendants.*

SONG.

*See the conqu'ring hero comes,
Sound the trumpet, beat the drums ;
Sports prepare, the laurel bring,
Sports of triumph to him sing.*

*See the godlike youth advance,
Breathe the flute and lead the dance ;
Myrtle, wreath, and roses twine
To deck the hero's brow divine.*

60

Heph. Hail, son of Jove ! great Alexander, hail !

Alex. Rise all ; and thou my second self, my friend,
Oh, my Hephestion ! raise thee from the earth !
Come to my arms, and hide thee in my heart ;
Nearer, yet nearer, else thou lov'st me not.

Heph. Not love my king ! bear witness all ye powers,
And let your thunder nail me to the centre,
If sacred friendship ever burn'd more brightly !
Immortal bosoms can alone admit

70

A flame more pure, more permanent than mine.

Alex. Thou dearer to me than my groves of laurel,
I know thou lov'st thy Alexander more
Than Clytus does the king.

Lys. Now for my fate !

I see that death awaits me—yet I'll on.

Dread sir ! I cast me at your royal feet.

Alex. Rise, my Lysimachus ! thy veins and mine
From the same fountain have deriv'd their streams :
Rise to my arms, and let thy king embrace thee.

80

Is not that Clytus ?

Clyt. Your old faithful soldier.

Alex. Clytus, thy hand—thy hand, Lysimachus ;
Thus doubly arm'd, methinks

I stand tremendous as the Lybian god,
Who, while his priests and I quaff'd sacred blood
Acknowledg'd me his son : my light'ning thou,
And thou my mighty thunder. I have seen
Thy glitt'ring sword outfly celestial fire ;
And when I've cry'd begone and execute,
I've seen him run swifter than starting hinds,
Nor bent the tender grass beneath his feet.

90

Lys. When fame invites, and Alexander leads,
Dangers and toils but animate the brave.

Clyt. Perish the soldier inglorious and despis'd,
Who starts from either when the king cries—on.

Alex. Oh, Clytus ! oh, my noble veteran !
'T was, I remember, when I pass'd the Granicus
His arm preserv'd me from the unequal force :
When fierce Itanor and the bold Rhesaces
Fell both upon me with two mighty blows,
And clove my temper'd helmet quite asunder,
Then like a god flew Clytus to my aid,
Thy thunder struck Rhesaces to the ground,
And turn'd with ready vengeance on Itanor.

100

Clyt. To your own deeds that victory you owe ;
And sure your arms did never boast a nobler.

Alex. By heaven they never did ; they never can ;

And I more glory to have pass'd that stream

110

Than to have drove a million o'er the plain.

Can none remember, yes—I know all must,

When glory like the dazzling eagle stood

Perch'd on my beaver in the Granick flood ;

When fortune's self my standard trembling bore,

And the pale fates stood frighted on the shore ;

When each immortal on the billows rode,

And I myself appear'd the leading god ?

Arist. Haste, first of hero's, from this fatal place ;

Far, far from Babylon enjoy your triumph ;

120

Or all the glories which your youth has won

Are blasted in their spring.

Alex. What mean thy fears ?

And why that wild distraction on thy brow ?

Arist. This morn, great king ! I view'd the angry sky,

And, frighted at the direful prodigies

To Orosmales for instructions flew ;

But as I pray'd deep echoing groans I heard,

And shrieks as of the damn'd that howl for sin :

Shock'd at the omen, while amaz'd I lay

130

In prostrate rev'rence on the trembling floor,

Thus spoke the god :

The brightest glory of imperial man,

The pride of nations, and the boast of fame ;

Remorseless fate in Babylon has doom'd

To sudden and irrevocable ruin.

Alex. If Heaven ordains that Babylon must fall—

Can I prevent the immutable decree ?

Enter PERDICCAS.

Per. O, horror ! horror ! dreadful and portentous !

Alex. How now, Perdiccas ! whence this exclamation ?

Per. As Meleager and myself this morn

141

Led forth the Persian horse to exercise,
We heard a noise as of a rushing wind ;
When suddenly a flight of baleful birds,
Like a thick cloud, obscur'd the face of Heaven ;
On sounding wings from diff'rent parts they flew,
Encount'ring met, and battled in the air——
Their talons clash'd, their beaks gave mighty blows,
And showers of blood fell copious from their wounds.

Alex. Though all the curtains of the sky were drawn, 150
And the stars wink, young Ammon shall go on.
While my Statira shines I cannot stray,
Love lifts his torch to light me on my way,
And her bright eyes create another day.

Lys. Vouchsafe, dread sir ! to hear my humble suit ;
A prince entreats it.

Alex. A soldier asks it—that 's the noblest claim.

Lys. For all the services my sword has done,
Humbly I beg the Princess Parisatis.

Alex. Lysimachus, no more—it is not well——
My word, you know, was to Hephestion given ;
How dare you then——

160

Lys. At your command to scale th' embattled wall,
Or fetch the gore-dy'd standard from the foe ;
When has Hephestion flown with warmer zeal ?
When did he leave Lysimachus behind ?
These I have done, for these were in my power ;
But when you charge me to renounce my love,
And from my thoughts to banish Parisatis,
Obedience there becomes impossible,
Nature revolts, and my whole soul rebels.

170

Alex. It does, brave sir !—Now hear me, and be dumb.
When by my order, curst Calisthenes

Was, as a traitor doom'd to live in torments,
 Your pity sped him in despite of me ;
 Think not I have forgot your insolence,
 No, though I pardon'd it—Yet if again
 Thou dar'st to cross me with another crime ;
 The bolts of fury shall be doubled on thee.
 In the mean time—think not of Parisatis,
 For if thou dost—by the immortal Ammon
 I'll not regard the blood of mine thou shar'st,
 But use thee as the vilest Macedonian.

180

Lys. I knew you partial ere I mov'd my suit ;
 Yet know it shakes not my determin'd purpose :
 While I have life and strength to wield a sword
 I never will forego the glorious claim.

Alex. Against my life ! ha ! traitor, was it so ?
 'Tis said that I am rash, of hasty humour ;

But I appeal to the immortal gods
 If every petty, poor, provincial lord
 Had temper like to mine ? My slave, whom I
 Could tread to clay, dares utter bloody threats !

190

Clyt. Forgive, dread sir ! the frantic warmth of love ;
 The noble prince, I read it in his eyes,
 Would die a thousand deaths to serve his king,
 And justify his loyalty and truth.

Lys. I meant his minion there should feel my arm ;
 Love claims his blood, nor shall he live to triumph
 In that destruction that awaits his rival.

200

Alex. I pardon thee for my old Clytus' sake ;
 But if once more thou mention thy rash love,
 Or dar'st attempt Hephestion's precious life ;
 I'll pour such storms of indignation on thee,
 Philotas' rack, Calisthenes' disgrace,
 Shall be delight to what thou shalt endure.

Clyt. My lord, the aged queen, with Parisatis,
Come to congratulate your safe arrival.

Enter SYSIGAMBIS and PARISATIS.

Alex. Oh thou, the best of women, Sysigambis !
Source of my joy, blest parent of my love !

210

Sys. In humble duty to the gods and you,
Permit us, sir, with gratitude to kneel.
Thro' you the royal house of Persia shines,
Rais'd from the depth of wretchedness and ruin,
In all the splendor of imperial greatness.

Alex. To meet me thus was generously done :
But still there wants to crown my happiness
That treasure of my soul, the dear Statira !
Had she but come to meet her Alexander,
I had been blest indeed.

220

Clyt. Now who shall dare
To tell him of the queen's vow ?

Alex. How fares
My love ?—— Ha ! neither answer me ! all silent !——
A sudden horror like a bolt of ice,
Shoots to my heart, and 'numbs the seat of life.

Heph. I would relate it, but my courage fails me.

Alex. Why stand you all as you were rooted here ?
What ! will none answer ! My Hephestion silent !
If thou hast any love for Alexander,
If ever I oblig'd thee by my care ;
When through the field of death my eye has watch'd thee,
Resolve my doubts, and rescue me from madness.

230

Heph. Your mourning queen has no disease but grief,
Occasion'd by the jealous pangs of love :
She heard, dread sir ! (for what can 'scape a lover !)
That you, regardless of your vows at Susa,

Had to Roxana's charms resign'd your heart,
And revell'd in the joys you once foreswore.

Alex. I own the subtle sorceress in my riot, 240
My reason gone, seduc'd me to her bed,
But when I wak'd I shook the Circe off,
Though the enchantress held me by the arm,
And wept and gaz'd with all the force of love ;
Nor griev'd I less for that which I had done
Than when at Thais' suit, enrag'd with wine,
I set the fam'd Persepolis on fire.

Heph. Your queen, Statira, in the rage of grief,
And agony of desperate love has sworn
Never to see your majesty again. 250

Alex. Oh, madam ! has she ? has Statira sworn
Never to see her Alexander more ?
Impossible ! she could not, would not, swear it.
Is she not gentle as the guileless infant ;
Mild as the genial breezes of the spring,
And softer than the melting sighs of love ?

Par. With sorrow, sir, I heard the solemn vow,
My mother heard it, and in vain adjur'd her
By every tender motive to recall it.

Sys. But with that fierceness she resents her wrongs, 260
Dwells on your fault, and heightens the offence,
That I could wish your majesty forget her.

Alex. Ha ! could you wish me to forget Statira !
The star which brightens Alexander's life,
His guide by day and goddess of his nights !
I feel her now, she beats in every pulse,
Throbs at my heart, and circles with my blood !

Sys. Have patience, son, and trust to Heaven and me ;
If my authority has any influence
I will exert it, and she shall be your's. 270

Alex. Haste, madam, haste, if you would have me live ;
Fly, ere for ever she abjure the world,
And stop the sad procession : [*Exit Sys.*] And, Parisatis,
Hang thou about her, wash her feet with tears——
Nay haste ; the breath of gods, and eloquence
Of angels go along with you. [*Exit Par.*
Oh, my heart !

Lys. Now let your majesty who feels the pangs
Of disappointed love, reflect on mine.

Alex. Ha !

280

Clyt. What ! are you mad ? Is this a time to plead ?

Lys. The properest time ; he dares not now be partial,
Lest Heaven in justice should avenge my wrongs,
And double every pang which he feels now.

Alex. Why dost thou tempt me thus to thy undoing ?
Death thou should'st have were it not courted so :
But know, to thy confusion, that my word,
Like destiny, admits of no repeal ;
Therefore in chains shalt thou behold the nuptials
Of my Hephestion. Guards, take him prisoner.

290

[*The Guards seize Lys.*

Lys. Away, ye slaves ! I'll not resign my sword,
'Till first I've drench'd it in my rival's blood.

Alex. I charge you kill him not ; take him alive ;
The dignity of kings is now concern'd,
And I will find a way to tame this rebel.

Clyt. Kneel—for I see rage lightning in his eyes.

Lys. I neither hope nor will I sue for pardon.
Had I my sword and liberty again ;
Again I would attempt his favourite's heart.

Alex. Hence from my sight, and bear him to a dungeon.
Perdiccas, give this lion to a lion :
None speak for him ; fly, stop his mouth ; away.

301

[*Exeunt Lys. Per. and Guards.*

Clyt. This comes of women—the result of love :
'Tis folly all, 't is phrenzy and distraction ;
Yet were I heated now with wine I doubt
I should be preaching in this fool's behalf.

Alex. Come hither, Clytus, and my friend Hephestion ;
Lend me your arms :

I fear betwixt Statira's cruel vows,
And fond Roxana's arts, your king will fall. 310

Clyt. Better the race of women were destroy'd,
And Persia sunk in everlasting ruin !

Heph. Look up, my lord, and bend not thus your head,
As if you purpos'd to forsake the world,
Which you have greatly won.

Alex. Would I had not ;
There 's no true joy in such unwieldy fortune.
Eternal gazers lasting troubles make ;
All find my spots, but few observe my brightness.
Stand from about me all, and give me air. 320

Yes, I will shake this Cupid from my soul,
I'll fright the feeble god with war's alarms,
Or drown his power in floods of hostile blood.
Grant me, great Mars ! once more in arms to shine,
And break like lightning through th' embattled line ;
Through fields of death to whirl the rapid car,
And blaze amidst the thunder of the war,
Resistless as the bolt that rends the grove ; 328
Or greatly perish like the son of Jove. [Exeunt.

ACT III. SCENE I.

An open Court ; Trumpets sounding a Dead March ; **LYSIMACHUS**
led Prisoner ; EUMENES, PERDICCAS, PARISATIS, and
Guards.

Parisatis.

STAY, my Lysimachus ! a moment stay !
 Oh, whither art thou going !—hold a moment !
 Unkind ! thou know'st my life was wrapt in thine,
 Why would'st thou then to worse than death expose me ?

Lys. Oh, may'st thou live in joys without allay !
 Grant it, ye gods ! a better fortune waits thee ;
 Live and enjoy it—'t is my dying wish,
 While to the grave the lost Lysimachus
 Alone retires, and bids the world adieu.

Par. Even in the grave will Parisatis join thee ; 10
 Yes, cruel man ! nor death itself shall part us :
 A mother's power, a sister's softening tears,
 With all the fury of a tyrant's frown,
 Shall not compel me to outlive thy loss.

Lys. Were I to live 'till nature's self decay'd
 This wondrous waste of unexampled love,
 I never could repay—O, Parisatis !
 Thy charms might fire a coward into courage,
 How must they act then on a soul like mine ?
 Defenceless and unarm'd I 'll fight for thee, 20
 And may perhaps compel th' astonish'd world,
 And force the king to own that I deserve thee.
 Eumenes, take the princess to thy charge.
 Away, Perdiccas, all my soul's on fire. [Exeunt.]

SCENE II.

The Palace. Enter ROXANA and CASSANDER.

Rox. Deserted! said'st thou? for a girl abandon'd!
A puny girl, made up of watery elements!
Shall she embrace the god of my desires,
And triumph in the heart Roxana claims?

Cas. Oh, princess! had you seen his wild despair,
Had you beheld him when he heard her vow, 30
Words would but wrong the agonies he felt;
He fainted thrice, and life seem'd fled for ever;
And when by our assiduous care recall'd,
He snatch'd his sword, and aim'd it at his breast;
Then rail'd at you with most unheard of curses.

Rox. If I forget it may'st thou, Jove, deprive me
Of vengeance, make me the most wretched thing
On earth while living, and when dead the lowest
Of the fiends.

Cas. Oh, nobly said! 40
Just is the vengeance which inflames your soul;
Your wrongs demand it—but let reason govern;
This wild rage else may disappoint your aims.

Rox. Away, away, and give a whirlwind room!
Pride, indignation, fury, and contempt,
War in my breast, and torture me to madness.

Cas. Oh, think not I would check your boldest flights:
No—I approve 'em, and will aid your vengeance:
But, princess, let us choose the safest course;
Or we may give our foes new cause of triumph, 50
Should they discover and prevent our purpose.

Rox. Fear not, Cassander, nothing shall prevent it,
Roxana dooms him, and her voice is fate.

My soul from childhood has aspir'd to empire ;
In early nonage I was us'd to reign
Among my she companions ; I despis'd
The trifling arts and little wiles of women,
And taught them with an Amazonian spirit
To win the steed, to chase the foaming boar ;
And conquer man, the lawless, charter'd savage.

60

Cas. Her words, her looks, her every motion fires me.

Rox. But when I heard of Alexander's fame,
How with a handful he had conquer'd millions,
Spoil'd all the east, and captive led our queens,
Unconquer'd by their charms,
With heavenly pity he assuag'd their woes,
Dry'd up th'ir tears, and sooth'd them into peace,
I hung attentive on my father's lips,
And wish'd him tell the wondrous tale again.
No longer pleasing were my former sports,
Love had it's turn, and all the woman reign'd :
Involuntary sighs heav'd in my breast,
And glowing blushes crimson'd on my cheek ;
Even in my slumbers I have often mourn'd
In plaintive sounds, and murmur'd Alexander.

70

Cas. Curse on his name—she doats upon him still.

Rox. At length this conqueror to Zogdia came,
And cover'd o'er with laurels storm'd the city ;
But oh, Cassander ! where shall I find words
To paint th' ecstatic transports of my soul ;
When 'midst the circle of unrivall'd beauties
I saw myself distinguish'd by the hero !
With artless rapture I receiv'd his vows,
The warmest sure that lover ever breath'd
Of fervent love and everlasting truth.

80

Cas. And need you then be told, those times are past !

Statira now engrosses all his thoughts ;
The Persian queen without a rival reigns
Sole mistress of his heart—nor can thy charms,
The brightest sure that ever woman boasted,
Nor all his vows of everlasting love,
Secure Roxana from disdain and insult.

90

Rox. Oh, thou hast rous'd the lion in my soul !
Ha ! shall the daughter of Darius hold him ?
No, 't is resolv'd ; I will resume my sphere,
Or falling, spread a general ruin round me.
Roxana and Statira ! they are names
That must for ever jar ;
When they encounter, thunder must ensue.

Cas. Behold she comes in all the pomp of sorrow, 100
Determin'd to fulfil her solemn vow. [*They retire.*]

Enter SYSIGAMBIS and STATIRA.

Rox. Away, and let us mark th' important scene,

Sys. Oh, my Statira ! how has passion chang'd thee !
Think in the rage of disappointed love,
If treated thus, and hurried to extremes,
What Alexander may denounce against us,
Against the poor remains of lost Darius.

Stat. Oh, fear not that ! I know he will be kind—
For my sake kind, to you and Parisatis.
Tell him I rail'd not at his falsehood to me,
But with my parting breath spoke kindly of him ;
Tell him I wept at our divided loves,
And sighing sent a last forgiveness to him.

110

Sys. No, I can ne'er again presume to meet him,
Never approach the much-wrong'd Alexander,
If thou refuse to see him—Oh, Statira !
Thy aged mother and thy weeping country

Claim thy regard, and challenge thy compassion :
Hear us, my child, and lift us from despair.

Stat. Thus low I cast me at your royal feet, 120
To bathe them with my tears ; or if you please
I'll let out life, and wash 'em with my blood ;
But I conjure thee not to rack my soul,
Nor hurry my wild thoughts to perfect madness :
Should now Darius' awful ghost appear,
And you, my mother, stand beseeching by,
I would persist to death, and keep my vow.

Rox. This fortitude of soul compels my wonder.

Sys. Hence from my sight ! ungrateful wretch begone !
Hence to some desert, 130
And hide thee where bright virtue never shone ;
For in the sight of Heaven I here renounce
And cast thee off, an alien to my blood. [*Exit Sys.*

Rox. [*Comes forward.*] Forgive, great queen, th' intrusion
of a stranger ;
With grief Roxana sees Statira weep :
I've heard and much applaud your fixt resolve
To quit the world for Alexander's sake ;
And yet I fear so greatly he adores you
That he will rather choose to die of sorrow— 140
Than live for the despis'd Roxana's charms.

Stat. Spare, madam, spare your counterfeited fears ;
You know your beauty, and have prov'd it's power :
Tho' humbly born, have you not captive held
In love's soft chains, the conqueror of the world !
Away to libertines, and boast thy conquest ;
A shameful conquest ! In his hour of riot
Then, only then, Roxana could surprise
My Alexander's heart.

Rox. To some romantic grove's sequester'd gloom 150

Thy sickly virtue would, it seems, retire,
 To shun the triumphs of a favour'd rival;
 In vain thou fly'st—for there, even there, I'll haunt thee,
 Plague thee all day, and torture thee all night:
 There thou shalt hear in what ecstatic joys
 Roxana revels with the first of men;
 And as thou hear'st the rapt'rous scene recited,
 With frantic jealousy thou 'lt madly curse
 Thy own weak charms, that could not fix the rover.

Stat. How weak is woman! at the storm she shrinks,
 Dreads the drawn sword, and trembles at the thunder; 161
 Yet when strong jealousy inflames her soul
 The sword may glitter, and the tempest roar;
 She scorns the danger, and provokes her fate.
 Rival, I thank thee—thou hast fir'd my soul,
 And rais'd a storm beyond thy power to lay;
 Soon shalt thou tremble at the dire effects,
 And curse too late, the folly that undid thee.

Rox. Sure the disdain'd Statira dares not mean it.

Stat. By all my hopes of happiness, I dare: 170
 And know, proud woman, what a mother's threats,
 A sister's sighs, and Alexander's tears,
 Could not effect, thy rival rage has done.
 My soul, that starts at breach of oaths begun,
 Shall to thy ruin violated run:
 I'll see the king in spite of all I swore;
 Tho' curs'd, that thou may'st never see him more.

Enter ALEXANDER, HEPHESTION, CLYTUS, &c.

Alex. Oh, my Statira!—thou relentless fair!
 Turn thine eyes on me—I would talk to them.
 What shall I say to work upon thy soul! 180
 What words, what looks, can melt thee to forgiveness?

Stat. Talk of Roxana, and the conquer'd Indies,
Thy great adventures, and successful love,
And I will listen to the rapt'rous tale ;
But rather shun me, shun a desp'rate wretch
Resign'd to sorrow and eternal woe.

Alex. Oh, I could die, with transport die before thee !
Would'st thou but as I lay convuls'd in death,
Cast a kind look or drop a tender tear :
Say but 't was pity one so fam'd in arms, 190
One who has 'scap'd a thousand deaths in battle ;
For the first fault should fall a wretched victim
To jealous anger, and offended love.

Rox. Am I then fallen so low in thy esteem,
That for another thou would'st rather die
Than live for me ?—How am I alter'd, tell me,
Since last at Susa with repeated oaths
You swore the conquest of ths world afforded
Less joy, less glory, than Roxana's love ?

Alex. Take, take that conquer'd world, dispose of crowns,
And canton out the empires of the globe ! 201
But leave me, madam, with repentant tears
And undissembled sorrows to atone
The wrongs I 've offer'd to this injur'd excellence.

Rox. Yes, I will go, ungrateful as thou art !
Bane to my life, and murd'rer of my peace,
I will be gone ; this last disdain has cur'd me.
But have a care—I warn you not to trust me ;
Or by the gods, that witness to thy perjuries,
I 'll raise a fire that shall consume you both,
Tho' I partake the ruin. 210

[Exit.

Enter SYSIGAMBIS.

Stat. Alexander !—Oh, is it possible !

Immortal gods ! can guilt appear so lovely !
Yet, yet I pardon, I forgive thee all.

Alex. Forgive me all ! oh, catch the heavenly sounds !
Catch them, ye winds ! and as ye fly, disperse
The rapt'rous tidings thro' th' extended world,
That all may join in Alexander's joy !

Stat. Yes, dear deceiver ! I forgive thee all,
But longer dare not hear thy charming tongue, 220
For while I hear thee my resolves give way ;
Be therefore quick, and take thy last farewell :
Farewell, my love—eternally farewell !

Alex. Oh, my Hephestion ; bear me, or I sink.
Why, why Statira, will you use me thus ?
I know the cause, my working brain divides it ;
You say you've pardon'd, but with this reserve,
Never again to bless me with your love.

Stat. All-seeing Heaven support me !

Alex. Speak to me love ; tho' banishment and death 230
Hang on thy lips, yet while thy tongue pronounces,
The music will awhile suspend my pains,
And mitigate the horrors of despair.
Oh, could I see you thus ?

Stat. His sorrows wound my heart,
Soft pity pleads, and I again must love him ;
But I have sworn, and therefore cannot yield.

Alex. Go, then, inhuman ! triumph in my pains,
Feed on the pangs that rend this wretched heart,
For now 't is plain you never lov'd, Statira ! 240
Oh, I could sound that charming cruel name
'Till the tir'd echo faint with repetition ;
'Till all the breathless groves and quiet myrtles
Shook with my sighs, as if a tempest bow'd 'em.
My tongue could dwell for ever on that name.
Statira ! oh, Statira !

Stat. Such was his looks, so melting was his voice,
Such his soft sighs, and his deluding tears,
When with that pleasing perjur'd breath avowing
His whispers trembled thro' my credulous ears, 250
And told the story of my utter ruin.
Gods ! if I stay, I shall again believe :
Farewell, thou greatest pleasure, greatest pain !

Alex. I charge ye, stay her ;
Oh, turn thee, thou bewitching brightness, turn,
Hear my last words, and see my dying pangs !
Lo ! at your feet, behold a monarch falls,
A prince who gave the conquer'd world to thee,
And thought thy love bought cheaply with the gift ;
Whose glories, laurels, bloom but in thy smiles, 260
Now shrunk and blasted by thy cruel hate,
Untimely falls. Yet oh ! when thou shalt die
May death be mild, as thou art cruel now,
And may thy beauties gently sink to earth,
While circling angels waft thee to repose !

Sys. Art thou turn'd savage ? is thy heart of marble ?
But if this posture move thee not to pity,
I never will speak more.

Alex. Oh, my Statira !
I swear, my queen, I'll not outlive our parting. 270
My soul grows still as death. Say, wilt thou pardon ?
'Tis all I ask. Wilt thou forgive the transports
Of a deep-wounded heart, and all is well ?

Stat. Rise, and may heaven forgive you like Statira !

Alex. You are too gracious—Clytus bear me hence.
When I am laid i' th' earth yield her the world.
There's something here that heaves as cold as ice,
That stops my breath. Farewell, farewell for ever !
Stat. Hold off, and let me run into his arms.

ACT IV.

THE RIVAL QUEENS.

45

My life, my love, my lord, my Alexander !

280

If thy Statira's love can give thee joy

Revive, and be immortal as the gods.

Alex. My flutt'ring heart, tumultuous with it's bliss,

Would leap into thy bosom : 't is too much.

Oh, let me press thee in my eager arms.

And strain thee hard to my transported breast.

Stat. But shall Roxana——

Alex. Let her not be nam'd.

Oh, madam ! how shall I repay your goodness ;

And you, my fellow warriors, who could grieve

290

For your lost king ? But talk of griefs no more ;

The banquet waits, and I invite you all.

My equals in the throne as in the grave,

Without distinction come, and share my joy.

Clyt. Excuse me, sir, if I for once am absent.

Alex. Excuse thee, Clytus ! none shall be excus'd ;

All revel out the day, 't is my command.

Gay as the Persian god ourself will stand

With a crown'd goblet in our lifted hand ;

Young Ammon and Statira shall go round,

300

While antic measures beat the burthen'd ground,

And to the vaulted skies our trumpets clangors sound.

[*Exeunt.*]

ACT IV. SCENE I.

Enter CLYTUS, HEPHESTION, and EUMENES.

Clytus.

URGE me no more, I hate the Persian dress,

Nor should the king be angry at the rev'rence

I owe my country—sacred are her customs,
 And honest Clytus will to death observe them.
 Oh ! let me rot in Macedonian rags,
 Or, like Calisthenes, be cag'd for life,
 Rather than shine in fashions of the east.

Eum. Let me, brave Clytus, as a friend intreat you.

Heph. What virtue is there that adorns a throne,
 Exalts the heart, and dignifies the man, 10
 Which shines not brightly in our royal master ?
 And yet perversely you 'll oppose his will,
 And thwart an innocent, unhurtful humour.

Clyt. Unhurtful ! oh, 't is monstrous affectation !
 Pregnant with venom, in it's nature black,
 And not to be excus'd ! — Shall man, weak man !
 Exact the rev'rence which we pay to Heaven,
 And bid his fellow-creatures kneel before him,
 And yet be innocent ? Hephestion, no ;
 The pride that lays a claim to adoration 20
 Insults our reason and provokes the gods.

Eum. Yet what was Jove, the god whom we adore ?
 Was he not once a man, and rais'd to heaven
 For generous acts and virtues more than human ?

Heph. By all his thunder and his sov'reign power
 I'll not believe the world yet ever felt
 An arm like Alexander's. — Not that god
 You nam'd, though riding in a car of fire,
 Could in a shorter space do greater deeds ;
 Or more effectually have taught mankind 30
 To bend submissive, and confess his sway.

Clyt. I tell you, boy, that Clytus loves the king
 As well as you or any soldier here ;
 Yet I disdain to sooth his growing pride :
 The hero charms me—but the god offends.

Heph. Then go not to the banquet.

Clyt. Why, I was bid,

Young minion—was I not, as well as you?

I'll go, my friend, in this old habit, thus,

And laugh, and drink the king's health heartily;

40

And while you blushing bow your heads to earth,

And hide them in the dust—I'll stand erect,

Straight as a spear, the pillar of my country,

And be by so much nearer to the gods.

Heph. But see, the king appears.

Enter ALEXANDER, STATIRA, SYSIGAMBIS, PARISATIS,
and Attendants.

Par. Oh, gracious monarch!

Spare him, oh, spare Lysimachus's life!

I know you will—the brave delight in mercy:

Alex. Shield me, Statira, shield me from her sorrows.

Par. Save him, oh, save him ere it be too late!

50

Speak the kind word; let not your soldier perish

For one rash action by despair occasion'd.

I'll follow thus, for ever on my knees;

You shall not pass. Statira, oh intreat him!

Alex. Oh, madam! take her, take her from about me;

Her streaming eyes assail my very soul,

And shake my best resolves.

Stat. Did I not break

Through all for you? Nay, now my lord, you must:

By all th' obedience I have paid you long,

60

By all your passion, sighs, and tender looks,

Oh, save a prince whose only crime is love!

Sys. I had not join'd in this bold suit, my son;

But that it adds new lustre to your honours.

Alex. Honour ! what 's that ? Has not Statira said it ?
 Were I the king of the blue firmament,
 And the bold Titans should again make war ;
 Though my resistless thunders were prepar'd,
 By all the gods she should arrest my arm
 Uplifted to destroy them ! Fly, Hephestion,
 Fly, Clytus ; snatch him from the jaws of death,
 And to the royal banquet bring him straight,
 Bring him in triumph, fit for loads of honour.

70

[*Exeunt* Heph. &c.]

Stat. Why are you thus beyond expression kind ?
 Oh, my lord ! my raptur'd heart,
 By gratitude and love at once inflam'd,
 With wild emotion flutters in my breast ;
 Oh, teach it then, instruct it how to thank you !

Alex. Excellent woman !

'Tis not in nature to support such joy.

80

Stat. Go, my best love ; unbend you at the banquet ;
 Indulge in joy, and laugh your cares away ;
 While in the bowers of great Semiramis
 I dress your bed with all the sweets of nature,
 And crown it as the altar of our loves ;
 Where I will lay me down and softly mourn,
 But never close my eyes 'till you return.

[*Exit.*]

Alex. Is she not more than mortal can desire,
 As Venus lovely, and Diana chaste ?
 And yet I know not why our parting shocks me ;
 A ghastly paleness sat upon her brow,
 Her voice, like dying echoes fainter grew,
 And as I wrung her by the rosy fingers
 Methought the strings of my great heart were crack'd.
 What could it mean ? Forward, Leomadus.

90

Enter ROXANA, CASSANDER, and POLYPERCHON.

Why, madam, gaze you thus ?

Rox. For a last look,
And to imprint the memory of my wrongs,
Roxana's wrongs on Alexander's mind.

Alex. On to the banquet.

[*Exit Alex. &c.*

Rox. Ha ! with such disdain ! 100
So unconcern'd ! Oh, I could tear myself,
Him, you, and all the hateful world to atoms.

Cas. Still keep this spirit up, preserve it still,
And know us for your friends : we like your rage :
Here in the sight of Heaven Cassander swears,
Unaw'd by death, to second your revenge :
Speak but the word, and swift as thought can fly
The tyrant falls a victim to your fury.

Rox. Shall he then die ? shall I consent to kill him ? 110
I that have lov'd him with that eager fondness,
Shall I consent to have him basely murder'd,
And see him clasp'd in the cold arms of death !——
No, Cassander !
Worlds should not tempt me to the deed of horror.

Poly. The weak fond scruples of your love might pass,
Was not the empire of the world concern'd ;
But, madam, think when time shall teach his tongue,
How will the glorious infant which you bear,
Arraign his partial mother for refusing 120
To fix him on the throne which here we offer ?

Cas. If Alexander lives you cannot reign,
Nor will your child : old Sysigambis plans
Your sure destruction ; boldly then prevent her :
Give but the word and Alexander dies.

Poly. Not he alone, the Persian race shall bleed :

At your command one universal ruin
Shall like a deluge 'whelm the eastern world,
'Till gloriously we raise you to the throne.

Rox. But 'till this mighty ruin be accomplish'd 130
Where can Roxana fly the avenging arms
Of those who must succeed this godlike man ?

Cas. Would you vouchsafe in these expanded arms
To seek a refuge, what could hurt you here ?
There you might reign with undiminish'd lustre
Queen of the east, and empress of my soul.

Rox. Disgrac'd Roxana ! whither art thou fallen ?
'Till this curs'd hour I never was unhappy :
There 's not one mark of former majesty
To awe the slave that offers at my honour. . 140

Cas. Impute not, madam, my unbounded passion
To want of rev'rence—I have lov'd you long.

Rox. Peace, villain ! peace, and let me hear no more.
'Think'st thou I 'd leave the bosom of a god
And stoop to thee, thou moving piece of earth !
Hence from my sight, and never more presume
To meet my eyes ; for mark me if thou dar'st,
To Alexander I 'll unfold thy treason,
Whose life, in spite of all his wrongs to me,
Shall still be sacred, and above thy malice. 150

Cas. By your own life, the greatest oath, I swear
Cassander's passion from this hour is dumb ;
And as the best atonement I can make
Statira dies, the victim of your vengeance.

Rox. Cassander rise ; 't is ample expiation.
Yes, rival, yes — this night shall be thy last ;
This night I know is destin'd for thy triumph,
And gives my Alexander to thy arms.
Oh, murderous thought !

Poly. The bow'rs of great Semiramis are made
The scene of love ; Perdiccas holds the guard. 160

Cas. Now is your time, while Alexander revels,
And the whole court re-echoes with his riot,
To end her, and with her to end your fears.
Give me but half the Zogdian slaves that wait you,
And deem her dead ! nor shall a soul escape
That serves your rival to disperse the news.

Rox. By me they die, Perdiccas and Statira ;
Hence with thy aid, I neither ask nor want it,
But with myself conduct the slaves to battle. 170
Were she to fall by any arm but mine,
Well might she murmur and arraign her stars ;
'Tis life well lost to die by my command.
Rival, rejoice, and pleas'd resign thy breath ;
Roxana's vengeance grants thee noble death. [Exit.

Cas. All but her Jove this Semele disdains.
We must be quick—she may perhaps betray
The great design, and frustrate our revenge.

Poly. Has Philip got instructions how to act ?

Cas. He has, my friend, and, faithful to our cause, 180
Resolves to execute the fatal order.

Bear him this vial—it contains a poison
Of that exalted force, that deadly nature,
Should Æsculapius drink it, in five hours
(For then it works) the god himself were mortal :
I drew it from Nonacris' horrid spring ;
Mix'd with his wine, a single drop gives death,
And sends him howling to the shades below.

Poly. I know it's power, for I have seen it try'd ;
Pains of all sorts, thro' ev'ry nerve and art'ry 190
At once it scatters—burns at once, and freezes,
'Till by extremity of torture forc'd

The soul consents to leave her joyless home,
And seeks for ease in worlds unknown to this.

Cas. Now let us part : with Thessalus and Philip
Haste to the banquet—At his second call
Let this be given him, and it crowns our hopes.
Now, Alexander, now, we 'll soon be quits ;
Death for a blow is interest indeed.

198

[*Exeunt.*]

SCENE II.

The Palace. ALEXANDER, PERDICCAS, CASSANDER, POLY-
PERCHON, EUMENES, *discovered at a Banquet, &c.*

[*Flourish of Trumpets.*]

Alex. To our immortal health and our fair queens : 200
All drink it deep ; and while the bowl goes round
Mars and Bellona join to make us music ;
A thousand bulls be offer'd to the sun,
White as his beams ; speak the big voice of war ;
Beat all our drums, and sound our silver trumpets ;
Provoke the gods to follow our example
In bowls of nectar and replying thunder.

[*Flourish of Trumpets.*]

Enter CLYTUS, HEPHESTION, and LYSIMACHUS *bloody.*

Clyt. Long live the king ! long live great Alexander !
And conquest crown his arms with deathless laurels,
Propitious to his friends, and all he favours. 210

Alex. Did I not give command you should preserve
Lysimachus ?

Heph. Dread sir ! you did,

Alex. What then
Portend these bloody marks ?

Heph. Ere we arriv'd
Perdiccas had already plac'd the prince
In a lone court, all but his hands unarm'd.

Clyt. On them were gauntlets ; such was his desire,
In death to show the difference betwixt 220
The blood of Æacus and common men.
Forth issuing from his den, amaz'd we saw
The horrid savage, with whose hideous roar
The palace shook : his angry eye-balls glaring
With triple fury, menac'd death and ruin.

Heph. With unconcern the gallant prince advanc'd.
Now, Parisatis, be the glory thine,
But mine the danger, were his only words ;
For as he spoke, the furious beast descry'd him,
And rush'd outrageous to devour his prey. 230

Clyt. Agile and vigorous, he avoids the shock
With a slight wound, and as the lion turn'd
Thrust gauntlet, arm and all into his throat,
And with Herculean strength tears forth the tongue :
Foaming and bloody, the disabled savage
Sunk to the earth, and plough'd it with his teeth ;
While with an active bound your conqu'ring soldier
Leap'd on his back, and dash'd his scull in pieces.

Alex. By all my laurels 'twas a godlike act !
And 't is my glory as it shall be thine, 240
That Alexander could not pardon thee.
Oh, my brave soldier ! think not all the prayers
And tears of the lamenting queens could move me
Like what thou hast perform'd : grow to my breast.

Lys. Thus, self-condemn'd, and conscious of my guilt,
How shall I stand such unexampled goodness ?
Oh, pardon, sir, the transports of despair,
The frantic outrage of ungovern'd love !

Ev'n when I show'd the greatest want of rev'rence
I could have dy'd with rapture in your service. 250

Alex. Lysimachus, we both have been transported :
But from this hour be certain of my heart.
A lion be the impress of thy shield ;
And that gold armour we from Porus won,
Thy king presents thee——But thy wounds ask rest.

Lys. I have no wounds, dread sir ! or if I had,
Were they all mortal, they should stream unminded,
When Alexander was the glorious health.

Alex. Thy hand, Hephestion : clasp him to thy heart,
And wear him ever near thee. Parisatis 260
Shall now be his, who serves me best in war.
Neither reply, but mark the charge I give ;
Live, live as friends—you will, you must, you shall :
'Tis a god gives you life.

Clyt. Oh, monstrous vanity !

Alex. Ha ! what says Clytus ? who am I ?

Clyt. The son of good King Philip.

Alex. By my kindred gods

'T is false. Great Ammon gave me birth.

Clyt. I 'ave done. 270

Alex. Clytus, what means that dress ? Give him a robe
there.

Take it and wear it.

Clyt. Sir, the wine, the weather,
Has heated me : besides, you know my humour.

Alex. Oh, 't is not well ! I 'd rather perish, burn,
Than be so singular and froward.

Clyt. So would I——

Burn, hang, drown, but in a better cause.
I 'll drink or fight for sacred majesty,
With any here. Fill me another bowl. 280
Will you excuse me ?

Alex. You will be excused :
But let him have his humour ; he is old.

Clyt. So was your father, sir ; this to his memory :
Sound all the trumpets there.

Alex. They shall not sound
'Till the king drinks. Sure I was born to wage
Eternal war. All are my enemies,
Whom I could tame—But let the sports go on.

Lys. Nay, Clytus, you that could advise so well— 290

Alex. Let him persist, be positive, and proud,
Envious and sullen, 'mongst the nobler souls,
Like an infernal spirit, that hath stole
From hell, and mingled with the mirth of gods.

Clyt. When gods grow hot, no difference I know,
'Twixt them and devils—Fill me Greek wine—yet—
Yet fuller—I want spirits.

Alex. Let me have music.

Clyt. Music for boys—Clytus would hear the groans
Of dying soldiers, and the neigh of steeds ; 300
Or, if I must be pester'd with shrill sounds,
Give me the cries of matrons in sack'd towns.

Heph. Let us, Lysimachus, awake the king ;
A heavy gloom is gath'ring on his brow.
Kneel all, with humblest adoration kneel,
And let a health to Jove's great son go round.

Alex. Sound, sound, that all the universe may hear.

[A loud flourish of Trumpets.

Oh, for the voice of Jove ! the world should know
The kindness of my people—Rise ! oh, rise !
My hands, my arms, my heart, are ever your's. 310

Clyt. I did not kiss the earth, nor must your hand—
I am unworthy, sir.

Alex. I know thou art :

Thou enviest the great honour of thy master.
Sit all my friends. Now let us talk of war,
The noblest subject for a soldier's mouth,
And speak, speak freely, else you love me not.
Who think you was the greatest general
That ever led an army to the field?

Heph. A chief so great, so fortunately brave, 320
And justly so renown'd, as Alexander,
The radiant sun, since first his beams gave light,
Never yet saw.

Lys. Such was not Cyrus, or the fam'd Alcides,
Nor great Achilles, whose tempestuous sword
Laid Troy in ashes, tho' the warring gods
Oppos'd him.

Alex. Oh, you flatter me!

Clyt. They do indeed, and yet you love them for 't,
But hate old Clytus for his hardy virtue. 330
Come, shall I speak a man with equal bravery,
A better general, and experter soldier?

Alex. I should be glad to learn: instruct me, sir.

Clyt. Your father Philip—I have seen him march,
And fought beneath his dreadful banner, where
The boldest at this table would have trembled.
Nay, frown not, sir, you cannot look me dead.
When Greeks join'd Greeks, then was the tug of war!
The labour'd battle sweat, and conquest bled.
Why should I fear to speak a bolder truth 340
Than e'er the lying priests of Ammon told you?
Philip fought men—but Alexander women.

Alex. All envy, spite and envy, by the gods!
Is then my glory come to this at last,
To conquer women! Nay, he said the stoutest,
The stoutest here, would tremble at his dangers.

In all the sickness, all the wounds I bore,
 When from my reins the jav'lin's head was cut,
 Lysimachus, Hephestion, speak, Perdiccas,
 Did I once tremble? Oh, the cursed falsehood! 350
 Did I once shake or groan, or act beneath
 The dauntless resolution of a king?

Lys. Wine has transported him.

Alex. No, 't is mere malice.

I was a woman too at Oxydrace,
 When planting on the walls a scaling ladder
 I mounted, 'spite of showers of stones, bars, arrows,
 And all the lumber which they thunder'd down.
 When you beneath cry'd out, and spread your arms,
 That I should leap among you—did I so? 360

Lys. Dread sir! the old man knows not what he says.

Alex. Was I a woman when, like Mercury,
 I leap'd the walls, and flew amidst the foe,
 And like a baited lion dy'd myself
 All over in the blood of those bold hunters;
 'Till spent with toil I battled on my knees,
 Pluck'd forth the darts that made my shield a forest,
 And hurl'd 'em back with most unconquer'd fury,
 Then shining in my arms I sunn'd the field,
 Mov'd, spoke, and fought, and was myself a war. 370

Clyt. 'Twas all bravado; for before you leap'd
 You saw that I had burst the gates asunder.

Alex. Oh, that thou wert but once more young and
 vig'rous!

That I might strike thee prostrate to the earth,
 For this audacious lie, thou feeble dotard!

Clyt. I know the reason why you use me thus:
 I sav'd you from the sword of bold Rhesaces,
 Else had your godship slumber'd in the dust,
 And most ungratefully you hate me for it.

Alex. Hence from the banquet : thus far I forgive thee.

Clyt. First try (for none can want forgiveness more) 381
To have your own bold blasphemies forgiven,
The shameful riots of a vicious life,
Philotas' murder——

Alex. Ha ! what said the traitor ?

Heph. Clytus, withdraw ; Eumenes, force him hence :
He must not tarry : drag him to the door.

Clyt. No, let him send me if I must be gone,
To Philip, Atalaus, Calisthenes,
To great Parmenio, and his slaughter'd sons. 390

Alex. Give me a javelin.

Heph. Hold, mighty sir !

Alex. Sirrah ! off,
Lest I at once strike thro' his heart and thine.

Lys. Oh, sacred sir ! have but a moment's patience.

Alex. What ! hold my arms ? I shall be murdered here,
Like poor Darius, by my barb'rous subjects.
Perdiccas sound our trumpets to the camp ;
Call all my soldiers to the court : nay, haste,
For there is treason plotting 'gainst my life, 400
And I shall perish ere they come to save me.
Where is the traitor ?

Clyt. Sure there is none amongst us.
But here I stand—honest Clytus,
Whom the king invited to the banquet.

Alex. Begone to Philip, Atalaus, Calisthenes—[*Stabs him.*
And let bold subjects learn by thy example,
Not to provoke the patience of their prince.

Clyt. The rage of wine is drown'd in gushing blood.
Oh, Alexander ! I have been to blame : 410
Hate me not after death ; for I repent
That I so far have urg'd your noble nature.

Alex. What 's this I hear ! say on, my dying soldier.

Clyt. I should have kill'd myself had I but liv'd
To be once sober—Now I fall with honour ;
My own hands would have brought foul death. Oh, pardon !

[*Dies.*

Alex. Then I am lost : what has my vengeance done !
Who is it thou hast slain ? Clytus ! what was he ?
The faithfullest subject, worthiest counsellor,
The bravest soldier, he who sav'd thy life,
Fighting bare-headed at the river Granick,
And now he has a noble recompense ;
For a rash word, spoke in the heat of wine,
The poor, the honest Clytus, thou hast slain ;
Clytus, thy friend, thy guardian, thy preserver !

420

Heph. Remove the body, it inflames his sorrow.

Alex. None dare to touch him : we must never part.
Cruel Hephestion, and Lysimachus,
That had the power, yet would not hold me. Oh !

Lys. Dear sir, we did.

430

Alex. I know ye did ; yet held me
Like a wild beast, to let me go again,
With greater violence.—Oh, ye have undone me !
Excuse it not ; you that could stop a lion
Could not turn me ! ye should have drawn your swords,
And barr'd my rage with their advancing points,
Made reason glitter in my dazzled eyes
'Till I had seen the precipice before me :
That had been noble—that had shewn the friend ;—
Clytus would so have done to save your lives.

440

Lys. When men shall hear how highly you were urg'd—

Alex. No ; you have let me stain my rising glory,
Which else had ended brighter than the sun.
Oh ! I am all a blot, which seas of tears

And my heart's blood can never wash away !
Yet 't is but just I try, and on the point
Still reeking hurl my black polluted breast.

Heph. Oh, sacred sir !—it shall not—must not be.

Lys. Forgive, dread sir ! forgive my pious hands,
That dare in duty to disarm my master. 450

Alex. Yes, cruel men ! ye now can shew your strength :
Here 's not a slave but dares oppose my justice,
Yet none had courage to prevent this murder :
But I will render all endeavors vain,
That tend to save my life—here will I lie, [*Falls on Clytus.*
Close to my murder'd soldier's bleeding side ;
Thus clasping his cold body in my arms,
'Till death like his has clos'd my eyes for ever.

Enter PERDICCAS.

Per. Treason ! foul treason ! Hephestion, where 's the
king ?

Heph. There, by old Clytus' side, whom he hath slain.

Per. Rise, sacred sir ! and haste to save the queen. 461
Roxana, filled with furious jealousy,
Came with a guard unmark'd ; she gain'd the bower,
And broke upon me with such sudden fury
That all have perish'd, who oppos'd her rage.

Alex. What says Perdiccas ! is the queen in danger ?

Per. Haste, sir, or she dies.

Alex. Thus from the grave I rise to save my love :
All draw your swords, on wings of lightning move,
Young Ammon leads you, and the cause is love. 470
When I rush on, sure none will dare to stay ;
'Tis beauty calls, and glory leads the way. [*Exeunt.*

ACT V. SCENE I.

The Bower of Semiramis.—STATIRA discovered.

Statira.

BLESS me, ye powers above, and guard my virtue !
Where are you fled, dear shades ? where are you fled ?
'Twas but a dream, and yet I saw and heard
My royal parents, who, while pious care
Sat on their faded cheeks, pronounc'd with tears;
Tears such as angels weep—this hour my last.
But hence with fear—my Alexander comes,
And fear and danger ever fled from him.
Would that he were here !

For oh, I tremble, and a thousand terrors
Rush in upon me and alarm my heart !
But hark ! 't is he, and all my fears are fled ;
My life, my joy, my Alexander comes !

Rox. [Within.] Make fast the gate with all its massy bars :
At length we 'ave conquer'd this stupendous height,
And reach'd the grove.

Stat. Ye guardian gods defend me !
Roxana's voice ! then all the vision 's true,
And die I must.

Enter ROXANA.

Rox. Secure the brazen gate.
Where is my rival ? 't is Roxana calls.

Stat. And what is she, who, with such tow'ring pride
Would awe a princess that is born above her ?

Rox. Behold this dagger !—'t is thy fate, Statira !
Behold, and meet it as becomes a queen.
Fain would I find thee worthy of my vengeance ;
Here, take my weapon then, and if thou dar'st—

Stat. How little know'st thou what Statira dares !
 Yes, cruel woman ! yes, I dare meet death
 With a resolve, at which thy coward heart
 Would shrink ; for terror haunts the guilty mind ;
 While conscious innocence, that knows no fear,
 Can smiling pass, and scorn thy idle threats.

30

Rox. Return, fair insolent ? return, I say :
 Dar'st thou, presumptuous, to invade my rights !
 Restore him quickly, to my longing arms,
 And with him give me back his broken vows,
 For perjur'd as he is, he still is mine,
 Or I will rend them from thy bleeding heart.

Stat. Alas, Roxana ! 't is not in my power ;
 I cannot, if I would—and oh, ye gods !
 What were the world to Alexander's loss ?

40

Rox. Oh, sorceress ! to thy accursed charms
 I owe the phrenzy that distracts my soul ;
 To them I owe my Alexander's loss :
 Too late thou tremblest at my just revenge,
 My wrongs cry out, and vengeance will have way.

Stat. Yet think, Roxana, ere you plunge in murder,
 Think on the horrors that must ever haunt you ;
 Think on the furies, those avenging ministers
 Of Heaven's high wrath, how they will tear your soul,
 All day distract you with a thousand fears ;
 And when by night thou vainly seek'st repose
 They 'll gather round and interrupt your slumbers
 With horrid dreams and terrifying visions.

50

Rox. Add still, if possible, superior horrors.
 Rather than leave my great revenge unfinish'd,
 I'll dare 'em all, and triumph in the deed ;
 Therefore—

[Holds up the dagger.]

Stat. Hold hold, thy hand advanc'd in air :

60

I read my sentence written in thine eyes ;
 Yet oh, Roxana ! on thy black revenge,
 One kindly ray of female pity beam ;
 And give me death in Alexander's presence.

Rox. Not for the world's wide empire should'st thou see
 him.

Fool ! but for him thou might'st unheeded live ;
 For his sake only, art thou doom'd to die.
 The sole remaining joy that glads my soul,
 Is to deprive thee of the heart I 'ave lost.

Enter Slave.

Slave. Madam, the king and all his guards are come,
 With frantic rage they thunder at the gate,
 And must, ere this, have gain'd admittance. 71

Rox. Ha !

Too long I 'ave trifled. Let me then redeem
 The time mispent, and make great vengeance sure.

Stat. Is Alexander, oh, ye gods ! so nigh,
 And can he not preserve me from her fury ?

Rox. Not he nor heaven shall shield thee from my justice.
 Die, sorc'ress, die, and all my wrongs die with thee !

[*Stabs her.*

Alex. [*Without.*] Away, ye slaves ! stand off—quick let
 me fly 80

With lightning's wings ! nor heaven nor earth shall stop me.

Enter ALEXANDER.

Ha ! oh my soul ! my queen, my love, Statira !
 These wounds ! are these my promis'd joys ?

Stat. Alas !

My only love, my best and dearest blessing !

Would I had died before you enter'd here ;
 For thus delighted, while I gaze upon thee
 Death grows more horrid, and I'm loth to leave thee.

Alex. Thou shalt not leave me—Cruel, cruel, stars !
 Oh, where's the monster, where's the horrid fiend, 90
 That struck at innocence and murder'd thee !

Rox. Behold the wretch, who, desperate of thy love,
 In jealous madness gave the fatal blow ;
 A wretch that to possess once more thy love
 Would with the blood of millions stain her soul.

Alex. To dungeons, tortures, drag her from my sight.

Stat. My soul is on the wing : oh come my lord,
 Haste to my arms, and take a last farewell.
 Thus let me die. Oh ! oh !

Alex. Look up my love. 100

Oh, Heaven ! and will you, will you take her from me !

Stat. Farewell, my most lov'd lord : ah me, farewell !
 Yet ere I die, grant this request.

Alex. Oh speak,
 That I may execute before I follow thee !

Stat. Leave not the world 'till Heaven demands you—
 Spare

Roxana's life—'T was love of you that caus'd
 The death she gave me. And oh ! sometimes think,
 Amidst your revels, think on your poor queen :
 And ere the cheerful bowl salutes your lips, 110
 Enrich it with a tear, and I am happy. [*Dies.*]

Alex. Yet ere thou tak'st thy flight—She's gone, she's
 gone !

All, all is hush'd, no music now is heard ;
 The roses wither, and the fragrant breath
 That wak'd their sweets shall never wake 'em more !

Rox. Weep not, my lord ! no sorrow can recall her.

Oh turn your eyes, and in Roxana's arms
You'll find fond love and everlasting truth!

Alex. Hence from my sight, and thank my dear Statira
That yet thou art alive.

120

Rox. Oh, take me to your arms!
In spite of all your cruelty I love you;
Yes, thus I'll fasten on your sacred robe,
Thus on my knees for ever cling around thee,
'Till you forgive me, or 'till death divides us.

Alex. Hence, fury, hence: there's not a glance of thine
But like a basilisk comes wing'd with death.

Rox. Oh speak not thus to one who kneels for mercy!
Think for whose sake it was I madly plung'd
Into a crime abhorrent to my nature.

130

Alex. Off, murd'ress, off! for ever shun my sight;
My eyes detest thee, for thy soul is ruin.

Rox. Barbarian! yes, I will for ever shun thee.—
Repeated injuries have steel'd my heart,
And I could curse myself for being kind.
If there is any majesty above,
That has revenge in store for perjur'd love,
Send, Heaven, the swiftest ruin on his head!
Strike the destroyer! lay the victor dead!
Kill the——

140

But what are curses?—curses will not kill,
Nor ease the tortures I am doom'd to feel.

Alex. Oh my fair star, I shall be shortly with thee!
What means this deadly dew upon my forehead?
My heart too heaves——

Cas. The poison works——

Enter EUMENES.

Eum. Pardon, dread sir! a fatal messenger:

The royal Sysigambis is no more.
 Struck with the horror of Statira's fate
 She soon expir'd, and with her latest breath, 150
 Left Parisatis to Lysimachus.
 But what I fear most deeply will affect you,
 Your lov'd Hephestion's——

Alex. Dead!—then he is blest!

But here, here lies my fate. Hephestion, Clytus!
 My victories all for ever folded up
 In this dear body. Here my banner's lost.
 My standard's triumphs gone.
 Oh, when shall I be mad! Give orders to
 The army that they break their shields, swords, spears, 160
 Pound their bright armour into dust——Away.
 Is there not cause to put the world in mourning?
 Burn all the spires that seem to meet the sky,
 Beat down the battlements of every city,
 And for the monument of this lov'd creature
 Root up these bowers, and pave 'em all with gold;
 Draw dry the Ganges, make the Indies poor,
 To deck her tomb; no shrine nor altar spare,
 But strip the pomp from gods to place it there. [Exit.

Enter THESSALUS.

Cas. He's gone—but whither—follow Thessalus, 170
 Attend his steps, and let me know what passes.

[Exit Thessalus.

Vengeance, lie still, thy craving shall be sated:
 Death roams at large, the furies are unchain'd,
 And murder plays her mighty master-piece.

Enter POLYPERCHON, THESSALUS, and PHILIP.

Phil. Saw you the king?

Poly. Yes ; with disorder'd wildness in his looks
He rush'd along, 'till with a casual glance
He saw me where I stood, then stepping short,
Draw near he cry'd—and grasp'd my hand in his,
Where more than fevers rage in every vein.

180

Oh, Polyperchon ! I have lost my queen !
Statira's dead !—and as he spoke, the tears
Gush'd from his eyes—I more than felt his pains.

Thes. Hence, hence away !

Cas. Where is he, Thessalus ?

Thes. I left him circled by a crowd of princes.
The poison tears him with that height of horror,
E'en I could pity him—He call'd his chiefs,
Embrac'd 'em round—then starting from amidst 'em,
Cry'd out, I come—'t was Ammon's voice ;—I know it— 190
Father, I come ; but let me ere I go,
Dispatch the business of a kneeling world !

Poly. No more ; I hear him—we must meet anon.

Cas. In Saturn's field—there give a loose to rapture,
Enjoy the tempest we ourselves have rais'd,
And triumph in the wreck which crowns our vengeance.

[*Exeunt.*]

SCENE II.

The Palace. ALEXANDER ^swith his Hair dishevelled, LYSIMACHUS, EUMENES, PERDICCAS, and Attendants discovered.

Alex. Search there ; nay, probe me, search my wounded
reins——

Pull, draw it out.

Lys. We have search'd, but find no hurt.

Alex. Oh, I am shot ! a forked burning arrow

200

Sticks cross my shoulders : the sad venom flies
Like lightning thro' my flesh, my blood, my marrow.

Lys. How fierce his fever !

Alex. Ha ! what a change of torments I endure !

A bolt of ice runs hissing thro' my bowels ;
'Tis sure the arm of death ; give me a chair ;
Cover me, for I freeze, and my teeth chatter,
And my knees knock together.

Eum. Have mercy, Heaven !

Alex. I burn, I burn again !

210

The war grows wondrous hot : hey for the Tigris !
Bear me, Bucephalus, amongst the billows.

[Jumps into the chair.]

Oh, 't is a noble beast ! I would not change him
For the best horse the sun has in his stable,
For they are hot, their mangers full of coals,
Their manes are flakes of lightning, curls of fire,
And their red tails like meteors whisk about.

Lys. Help all ; Eumenes, help.

Alex. Ha, ha, ha ! I shall die with laughter.

Parmenius, Clytus, do you see yon' fellow ?
That ragged soldier, that poor tatter'd Greek ?
See how he puts to flight the gaudy Persians
With nothing but a rusty helmet on, thro' which
The grisly bristles of his pushing beard
Drive 'em like pikes—Ha, ha, ha !

220

Per. How wild he talks.

Lys. Yet warring in his wildness.

Alex. Sound, sound ! keep your ranks close. Ay, now
they come ;

Oh, the brave din, the noble clang of arms !
Charge, charge apace, and let the phalanx move.
Darius comes—ay, 't is Darius,

230

I see, I know him by the sparkling plumes,
 And his gold chariot drawn by ten white horses;
 But like a tempest, thus I pour upon him——
 He bleeds! with that last blow I brought him down;
 He tumbles; take him, snatch th' imperial crown.
 They fly, they fly!—Follow, follow—Victoria!
 Victoria! Victoria!—— [Leaps into the Soldiers' arms.

Per. Let's bear him softly to his bed.

Alex. Hold, the least motion gives me instant death, 240
 My vital spirits are quite parch'd, burnt up,
 And all my smoky entrails turned to ashes.

Lys. When you, the brightest star that ever shone,
 Shall set, it must be night with us for ever.

Alex. Let me embrace you all before I die.

[All kneel and weep.

Weep not, my dear companions, the good gods
 Shall send you in my stead a nobler prince,
 One that shall lead you forth with matchless conduct.

Lys. Break not our hearts with such unkind expressions.

Per. We will not part with you, nor change for Mars. 250

Alex. Perdiccas, take this ring,
 And see me laid in the temple of Jupiter Ammon.

Lys. To whom does your dread majesty bequeath
 The empire of the world?

Alex. To him that is most worthy.

Per. When will you, sacred sir, that we should give
 To your great memory those divine honours,
 Which such exalted virtues does deserve?

Alex. When you are all most happy and in peace.
 Your hands—Oh, father! if I have discharg'd 260
 The duty of a man to empire born;
 If by unweary'd toils I have deserv'd
 The vast renown of thy adopted son,

Accept this soul which thou did'st first inspire,
And which this sigh thus gives thee back again!

[Dies.

Lys. There fell the pride and glory of the war.
If there be treason let us find it out,
Lysimachus stands forth to lead you on,
And swears, by these most honour'd dear remains,
He will not taste those joys which beauty brings,
Until he has reveng'd the best of kings.

270

[Exeunt.

7 JUL 59



EPILOGUE.

WHATE'ER they mean, yet ought they to be curst
Who this censorious age did polish first,
Who the best play for one poor error blame,
As priests against our ladies' arts declaim,
And for one patch both soul and body damn.
But what does more provoke the actor's rage,
(For we must show the grievance of the stage)
Is that our women which adorn each play,
Bred at our cost, become at length our prey :
While green and sour, like trees, we bear them all,
But when they 're mellow straight to you they fall ;
You watch them bare and squab, and let them rest,
But with the first young down you snatch the nest.
Pray leave those poaching tricks, if you are wise,
Ere we take out our letters of reprise ;
For we have vow'd to find a sort of toys,
Known to black friars, a tribe of chopping boys ;
If once they come they 'll quickly spoil your sport ;
There 's not one lady will receive your court :
But for the youth in petticoats run wild,
With, oh ! the archest wag, the sweetest child,
The panting breast, white hands, and lilly feet !
No more shall your pall'd thoughts with pleasure meet ;
The woman in boy's clothes all boy shall be,
And never raise your thoughts above the knee.
Well, if our women knew how false you are,
They would stay here, and this new trouble spare :
Poor souls ! they think all gospel you relate,
Charm'd with the noise of settling an estate ;
But when at last your appetites are full,
And the tir'd Cupid grows with action dull,

*You'll find some tricks to cut off the entail,
And send them back to us all worn and stale.
Perhaps they'll find our stage, while they have rang'd
To some vile canting conventicle chang'd;
Where, for the sparks who once resorted there,
With their curl'd wigs that scented all the air,
They'll see grave blockheads with short greasy hair,
Green aprons, steeple-hats, and collar-bands,
Dull sniv'ling rogues that ring—not clap their hands.
Where, for gay punks, that drew the shining crowd,
And misses that in vizards laugh'd aloud,
They'll hear young sisters sigh, see matrons old
To their chopp'd cheeks their pickled kerchers hold,
Whose zeal too might persuade, in spite to you,
Our flying angels to augment their crew,
While Farringdon their hero struts about 'em.
And ne'er a damning critic dares to flout 'em.*

7 JUL 52

THE END.

